The Report of the Accreditation Visiting Team

Whitehorse High School P.O. Box 660 Montezuma Creek, Utah 84543

October 22, 2003





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Whitehorse High School P.O. Box 660 Montezuma Creek, UT 84543

October 22, 2003

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, October 22, 2003, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Whitehorse High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Orlo Knight is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Whitehorse High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Whitehorse High School.

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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WHITEHORSE HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

•	PrincipalAssistant Principal		
Counseling			
Cita Holly			
<u>Su</u>	pport Staff		
<u>Comp</u>	uter Technician		
Rob Henderson	Technician		
<u>O</u>	Office Staff		
Evelyn Kaniatobe	Liaison		
	Financial Secretary		
•	Administrative AssistantRegistrar		
Te	achers		
Matt Baldwin	Language Arts		
	ScienceReading		
	Technology		
Spencer Dunford	Language Arts		
John Fahey	Technology		

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Robert Hall.				
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Bret Jacobsen.				
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John Mabarak.				
Justin Moon.	<u> </u>			
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Ed Reynolds	-			
Bob Sanders				
Kim Schaefer	<i>53</i>			
Janet Schroedter.				
Linda Sosa.				
Adam Toledo				
Ron Winegar				
Education Assists	<u>ants</u>			
D 1: II 1				
Robin Henderson.				
Marietta Hatathle	-			
Rachel Jones.				
Bernice Shorty				
Irene Livingston	Star Lab			
Kitchen Staff				
Kitchen Staff	<u>.</u>			
Annie Hamm	Cook			
Virginia Hamm				
Annie Oldman				
Betty Norton.				
Custodial Staf	<u>ff</u>			
	_			
Yolanda Yanito	Sweeper			
Yolanda Yanito	Sweeper Sweeper			
Yolanda Yanito	SweeperSweeperSweeper			
Yolanda Yanito	Sweeper Sweeper Sweeper Sweeper			
Yolanda Yanito	Sweeper Sweeper Sweeper Sweeper Sweeper Grounds Worker			

WHITE HORSE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Whitehorse High School is to provide opportunities for students to obtain life skills and develop critical thinking through cultural growth in order to be contributing citizens.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe all students can demonstrate academic and communicative skills by successfully passing the U-PASS test and completing all graduation requirements.

We believe Whitehorse High School empowers students to develop critical thinking skills to determine their successful path in life.

We believe education begins at home: parents, educators and community members are the foundation for future generations.

We believe Whitehorse High School creates pathways for the students to become successfuln within their choice of endeavor.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Andy Odoardi, Salt Lake City School District, Visiting Team Chairperson Linda Alder, Curriculum Coordinator, Utah State Office of Education Shirley Silversmith, Education Specialist, Utah State Office of Education

VISITING TEAM REPORT

WHITEHORSE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Whitehorse High School is a public, rural junior/senior high school. Current enrollment is listed at three hundred and twenty six students. The school is located in Montezuma Creek, Utah, and serves two Chapters of the local Navaho population. Students are drawn from several small communities beyond Montezuma Creek: Aneth, Red Mesa, and Bluff.

The original school was built in 1978. A technology center was added in 1992, and a junior high wing in 1998.

Whitehorse High School initiated its self-study two years ago after attending a one-day overview training for school leadership teams.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The school's profile incorporates standardized test data (SAT 9), Utah Core Test data, student ethnicities, compensatory assistance data, and local demographic information.

Thirty-four percent of the students are classified as Fully English Proficient, and sixty-six percent are considered Partially English Proficient. Two hundred forty-five students live in a single-parent or guardian home. Forty-four students have been assessed as Special Education students. Ninety-three percent of the students are on a free or reduced-price lunch program. There are 156 students who have no utilities in their homes.

Analysis of the data reveals uneven progress toward improvement in student performance on the State Core Assessments. Disaggregation of the data based on gender and ethnicity might assist the school in identifying specific student populations that may be in need of additional support. In discussions with administration and school leadership, it was evident the staff has initiated the process of collecting student data and using data to make decisions regarding school improvement goals, staff development needs, and allocation of resources. Although this was not presented in the school's profile, the staff did examine GPA data in considering appropriate school improvement goals.

The action plans reflect elements that do need attention and were not all addressed in the profile. There is a need to improve communication between stakeholder groups in the school community. Although a closer analysis of the results reveals that the majority of students and parents feel the staff, counselors, and administrators are doing a good job keeping them informed, the administration and staff are to be commended for their continuing efforts to improve communication at the site.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

Whitehorse High School should continue its effort to systematically collect and analyze pertinent student data to guide the decisions made by the school. This effort should extend to disaggregating both state and national standardized test data by content clusters, gender, and grade level.

It is recommended that the school include a broader picture of what happens at the school. There are programs and activities that enhance the quality of the students' experience at the school that were not included in the profile. The recognition program for students who are achieving and improving is an example of this. The work of the Assessment Team is another.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The profile should provide a clearer picture of who is learning and who is not, and who might be better served by acceleration and greater challenge.
- The Visiting Team encourages the use of the surveys by NSSE as a means of gaining the perspectives of the students, parents, and teachers about the work and effectiveness of the school. Given the difficulties presented by distance and family requirements, it would be useful to know the nature of after-school opportunities and the numbers of students who participate.
- In an effort to identify specific student achievement targets, both the Utah State Core Tests and Stanford 9 scores should be disaggregated by content clusters and quintiles (mastery, partial mastery, minimal, and near) for each grade level and, if possible, by gender and ethnicity. The Visiting Team recognizes that this may prove to be a challenge for the school due to limitations at the state and district levels in current data reporting practices. The analysis of course grades, attendance, and discipline patterns should be incorporated into the school's comprehensive profile in the future.
- The staff should consider reexamining the school survey data and comparing satisfaction levels of students and parents by department. This comparison would allow each department to set individual performance goals/standards for their department and work collaboratively to achieve these goals.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

The Visiting Team recognizes the good faith effort on the part of the staff and the administration to engage the community in the self-study process. Yet the expected level of collaboration was not achieved. There are many reasons for the difficulty of including parents systematically in the process, but there was no fundamental obstacle to including the students more fully in the process.

Responses from staff, parents, and students reflected questions about the purposes of the process, as well as the roles of the desired results for students learning and the action plans that will drive the work of the school over the next several years. The ultimate success of the school improvement plans requires support from the community.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The work in the departments was exceptional in assessing strengths and limitations. The action plans offer further elaboration of perceived needs that must be met. Information presented in the school's self-study focused predominately on the results of student achievement data (SAT/CRTs), and focus groups that were formed to address teacher/parent/staff concerns. Many of the school's strengths, discovered by the Visiting Team, were not clearly identified in the report. For example, many of the teachers used a variety of effective instructional practices that were not clearly identified. Additionally, the teachers' high level of collegiality, passion for students, willingness to engage in professional development opportunities, student recognition programs, and efforts to collaborate are just a few of the school's strengths that were not highlighted in the self-study.

The staff of Whitehorse High School recognizes their strengths as effective educators, and yet most of the staff is willing to endorse the concept of continuous improvement on behalf of their students. As the school becomes more knowledgeable about using the self-study process to accurately identify student achievement gaps, reflect on current educational practices, and examine organizational practice, they will be more effective at identifying both their strengths and limitations in light of current "best practices."

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Whitehorse High School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

- 1. Students will be prepared to enter college, vocational training, or the job market by following their Student Education Occupation Plan
- 2. Students will be self-directed learners
- 3. Students will have appropriate communication skills
- 4. Students will be responsible and productive members of society
- 5. Students will be equipped with critical thinking and problem solving skills
- 6. Students will have developed individual talents and interests that will enhance the quality of their lives

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

The interviews with staff and students affirmed that the administration and the leadership team assumed the primary responsibility for developing the school's beliefs and mission statements. Other stakeholders, teachers, parents, and community members had opportunities to provide input and feedback through the consensus-building process to define the school's mission. The Visiting Team would have liked to see evidence of greater student participation and input.

A concerted effort to involve all stakeholders in using the mission and belief statements in decisions pertaining to school culture, classroom instruction, and the development of the DRSLs faced the same general inhibitors of distance and family circumstance that reduced the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

The school's belief statements address some of the key issues pertinent to decision making and policy development. However, the Visiting Team recommends the faculty and staff work to extend the school's beliefs to include the staff's commitment to student learning and their beliefs regarding teaching practices that maximize student learning.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The Visiting Team applauds the efforts of the school leadership team in targeting communication and higher order thinking skills as a focus for student achievement. The Visiting Team recommends that staff and stakeholders revisit the DRSLs in order to increase levels of commitment among staff and define measurable goals and assessment strategies to monitor student achievement of the DRSLs, in order to assess whether or not students are becoming more effective communicators and/or critical thinkers as a result of classroom instruction.

Throughout the narrative of the departmental analysis and the narrative of the focus groups, there is clear evidence of attention to the issue of alignment of curriculum, instruction, and the DRSLs with the mission and belief statements and the action plans.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The faculty is familiar with the Utah Core Curriculum. Some collaboration between departments has taken place to integrate Core concepts. The Visiting Team feels that a more definitive reference to the Utah Life Skills curriculum might have enhanced the development of the DRSLs by providing the indicators of student performance.

Articulation has begun around what is most essential in the Core. There is a strong desire among some staff members to collaborate around integrated curricula and instructional strategies. The Visiting Team suggests the staff continue to find time and methods for integrating core concepts across content areas and grade levels.

There is a clear sense of the alignments that currently exist, both with the Core and with DRSLs, as reported in the departmental analyses. The faculty should continue this process by coordinating key concepts between and among departments.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

Although it is evident that schoolwide conversations have taken place around the accreditation process, a clear inclusionary focus cannot be articulated by all staff

members. The desired results for student learning do not clearly reflect the outcomes of these discussions. Therefore, increasing schoolwide understanding of criteria for selecting the desired results for student learning (DRSLs) will enable the school community to have a clear focus around curriculum and instruction. These DRSLs are broad enough to encompass and reinforce the effective practices already occurring at the school. The schoolwide focus on reading/writing across content is emerging and needs to be formalized into a schoolwide effort to support the action plan. Clarifying and refining specific action steps connected to the DRSLs will help drive this plan. Formal and informal steps have been taken to promote a collaborative culture.

Quality Instructional Design:

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

The Visiting Team observed the following practices: Teachers were giving tests, students were working in small groups, hands-on activities were widely used in the technology department, information was delivered by direct instruction, students were completing worksheet packets, and group discussions were taking place. The Visiting Team suggests that the staff collectively research and expand the use of multiple teaching strategies to meet the needs of all students.

Random students were interviewed by each of the Visiting Team members. They reported that most teachers rely heavily on lecture and give reading assignments to complete in class. They reported feeling bored in their classes and frustrated by short class periods, and felt they didn't have enough time to get help before being sent home with homework. The Visiting Team has observed the faculty to be dedicated, hardworking, and committed to students' success. Perhaps exploring alternative instructional approaches and ways of assessing student preparation for assigned tasks will improve student engagement and achievement.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

The faculty needs to give serious attention to recognizing and meeting the range of student learning styles that are encountered in every classroom. The Visiting Team suggests that the faculty collectively research and expand the use of multiple teaching strategies and instructional delivery options to meet the variety of student needs through the use of differentiated instruction. It was brought out in interviews with parents, students, and teachers that attention needs to be given to the learning needs of more able students.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

There are a variety of programs to support student learning in addition to the regular classroom, such as peer tutoring, after-school tutoring, accessibility of facility before and after school, academic and attendance tracking, and extra-curricular activities. The staff is encouraged to investigate the effectiveness of these programs in meeting student needs, as well as whether or not all groups of students are able to take advantage of these support structures.

There will need to be significant attention paid to the logistics of opportunities that might be offered after school. Transportation and family issues, as well as resources at home, weigh heavily on this endeavor. The Visiting Team has made recommendations that address this topic.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

Schoolwide assessment is primarily left to the district or state. The mission statement begins to address expectations for student achievement. Data is being used to measure school improvement. Where expectations are clearly defined for staff and students, results are evident. Where state performance standards are in place, teachers are implementing performance assessments to measure growth.

Many classes are using measures beyond paper-and-pencil tests. The focus group report articulates the faculty practice of using a variety of assessments appropriate to content goals and student characteristics. Some classes are using pre and post assessments, but there do not seem to be schoolwide standards that are being articulated for measurement. Disaggregating the data will provide additional information on individual student progress and offer the framework for the development of schoolwide assessments tied to the DRSLs.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

The staff is striving for more opportunities to collect data from assessments beyond standardized test scores. As in most schools, the development of benchmark assessments is on a department or classroom level rather than a schoolwide basis. However, ongoing efforts to create schoolwide assessments will provide additional data. There is evidence of performance assessment in some classes. Schoolwide strategies for increasing the use of performance assessments would provide important additional data. Clarifying the DRSLs and identifying specific measurable indicators will also help facilitate schoolwide measurements. Individualization and differentiation is taking place in some classes and will be strengthened by expanding the conversations among staff, parents, and students regarding who is not learning in the school and why.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

Interviews with students reflected the sense of fairness students felt regarding individual teacher grading practices. There is no schoolwide grading policy.

There is ongoing school administrative support and training for access to and use of student performance data. There is a strong desire among the administration and staff to receive and learn to use timely and accurate data in order to better serve the needs of all students. The staff understands that using data leads them to better instructional decisions.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The leadership of Whitehorse High School extends beyond the administrative team. Many of the staff members and parents have assumed the responsibility of leadership in an effort to improve the school on behalf of students. Some of the teaching staff have assumed a leadership role by delivering professional development opportunities for their colleagues. Teachers, the guidance counselor, parents, and administration shared the leadership for the development of the self-study.

The leadership, both formal and informal, now faces a new challenge as a result of this self-study: to focus the **entire school community** on the school's action plan and the recommendations of the Visiting Team.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision-making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?

The school leadership is beginning to employ data-driven, research-based decision-making. Currently, the lack of sufficiently disaggregated data regarding student achievement limits the school's ability to triangulate data in the decision making process. The administration is cognizant of the need to collect pertinent information not only to improve the decision-making process, but also to monitor school improvement efforts.

The leadership made a sincere effort to survey both parents and students before determining which school improvements to include in the action plan. While the data did reveal some problem areas needing to be addressed, the data was limited in scope and therefore did not provide adequate information regarding school and classroom practices. It is suggested that the leadership continue to extend and

refine its data collection efforts and inquiry into effective practices. The seven NSSE rubrics, in addition to the study of "best practices" by all classroom teachers, would provide a common focus and language for future improvement efforts.

c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?

The leadership at Whitehorse High School does not have a comprehensive assessment system in place at this time. The development of a comprehensive assessment system linked to the DRSLs will be one of the school's major tasks as it works to implement the action plans.

d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

The leadership at Whitehorse High School provides skillful stewardship of the school. Parents, students, and staff repeatedly commended the school's leadership for improving the school's climate and culture over the past three years. Schoolwide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission, and are designed to support student learning. The allocation and use of resources appears to be aligned with school goals and action plans.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

Whitehorse High School is in the initial stages of implementing and refining its desired results for student learning, establishing school goals, and identifying appropriate improvement steps. The leadership has identified a process for ensuring the allocation and use of resources that are aligned with the school goals and the achievement of the DRSLs. These are indicated in each of the action plans.

Based on conversations with the leadership, the Visiting Team is confident of the leadership's commitment to the improvements identified by the school community during the self-study process, as well as any recommendations made by the Visiting Team.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The administrative team recognizes and empowers staff, parents, and students to share in the responsibilities of leadership. In doing so, the administration encourages commitment, participation, and collaboration. The administration is encouraged to continue building the knowledge, skills, and expertise of the staff to employ data-driven and research-based decision-making.

The Visiting Team has made some recommendations with respect to this item with the hope of providing focus to the school, and adds the suggestion to be more inclusive of student participation.

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team recognizes the positive and productive relationships that exist among students, teachers, support staff, and administrators. There is strong evidence that the school is creating and sustaining a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging. The Visiting Team encourages the staff to continue their efforts to collaborate across departments, to foster collegiality, and to provide cross-curricular connections for students.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

One of the action plans addresses this issue directly. Linkages to the major local oil and gas companies that provided financial support and facilities are fostered and well utilized by the school. It would seem, however, that ties to local community entities, such as the tribal council, need to be enhanced.

<u>Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:</u>

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The opportunities presented by having two individuals dedicated to providing onsite professional development are significant in the effort to build a capacity for ongoing school improvement.

The staff is actively involved in staff development based on their own needs and desires. It is suggested that staff development efforts become more focused on the DRSLs. The staff should continue to look at assessments of student

performance relative to the DRSLs in order to collect data to verify that teaching strategies and student learning reflect the degree of attainment of the DRSLs.

The action plans incorporate the need and provide the resources for supporting ongoing professional development activities.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The leadership in the school fully supports the faculty, and the faculty appears to fully support the leadership. There appears to be a strong desire to do what is best for students. The faculty needs to develop a clearer schoolwide focus on the desired results for student learning. The staff should continue to look at formal as well as informal assessments to collect data to verify that teaching strategies assure student learning.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (NASCU) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met.

Standard II - Student Personnel Services

This standard is met.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met.

Standard V - Records

This standard is met.

Standard VI – School Improvement

This standard is met. This is addressed in the self-study.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met.

Standard VIII - Administration

This standard is met.

Standard IX - Teacher Load

This standard is met.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

The action plan currently addresses several major concerns identified by the staff and reflected in the profile data. It effectively addresses critical areas for improvement. The entire staff is encouraged to focus its efforts on those areas that will directly affect student learning and student achievement.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?

The leadership team and administration, as well as some of the teaching staff, share a strong commitment to the action plan. However, it was apparent that some of the faculty was unaware of the school's DRSLs and the impact that implementing the DRSLs will have on classroom instruction and assessment. The administration and leadership team will need to secure the commitment of the staff before proceeding to implement some portions of the action plan and Visiting Team recommendations.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?

The action plans for both the school and each department recognize the need for monitoring and/or evaluating the effectiveness of the school's/department's improvement plan. In order to monitor school/department improvement efforts and evaluate their effectiveness, the leadership still needs to identify what data/evidence should be collected and periodically analyzed by the school leadership team.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The staff and administration are commended for their sincere effort to conduct a candid, honest, and open self-study of their school and to use this process to identify improvement targets on behalf of the students and parents they serve.
- The staff and administration are commended for their articulation of the unit and lesson plans as a reflection of teacher goals, as recorded and contained in the "Black Book."
- The administration and staff are commended for their recognition program for students who improve and achieve in both academics and other areas of achievement. This is clear evidence of the effort to maintain a positive learning environment and high expectations for students. The school is a safe place for students. The teachers exemplify caring for student successes.
- The administration and staff are commended for the attention they give and the effort they make to tie the academic learning experiences of the students to the cultural values of the students and the community.
- The staff and administration are to be commended for their conscious and diligent efforts toward creating a positive culture and climate conducive to teaching and learning.

Recommendations:

The Visiting Team is in substantial agreement with the analyses that come out of the departmental and focus groups and the goals of the action plans. They are indicative of

the high quality of the self-study effort and the integrity of the processes in working to develop the school improvement plans. The Visiting Team's hope is to narrow the focus for the school's improvement processes and link them to attainable results by virtue of the following recommendations.

- The Visiting Team recommends an overall effort to devise ways to engage the parents in the operation of the school and the academic lives of the students. The paid parent liaison with the Chapters could be more fully utilized, and the parent council more formally organized. The Visiting Team feels that consideration should be given to holding the SEOP conferences at the Chapter houses, and to locating a computer lab at the Chapter houses for student use after school hours. The Visiting Team encourages the continuation of training parents on how to engage with the school and how to conduct constructive meetings.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school enhance its linkages with its feeder schools regarding curriculum and program alignment, and more fully utilize the level of knowledge and ability of the entering students in designing subsequent curriculum and instruction.
- Whitehorse High School should continue its efforts to systematically collect and analyze pertinent student data to guide decisions made by the school, departments, and teams. It is suggested that the school develop an effective data collection and management system that can be utilized to provide more reliable data for making judgments regarding academic growth by individual students or groups of students. This effort should extend to disaggregating both state and national norm-referenced test data by content cluster, gender, grade level, and ethnicity. The school should align the action plans to address findings resulting from the data analysis.
- Continue to seek innovative ways of increasing the opportunity for teachers to collaborate for the purpose of staff development, sharing best practices and implementing the school's action plan. The school needs to engage the whole staff in collaborative inquiry with regard to the school's DRSLs. This would include:
 - o Posting the DRSLs as expectations that are operational in every classroom.
 - Working to increase schoolwide understanding of the purpose and criteria used for selecting the DRSLs.
 - Collectively studying best practices and research in the teaching and assessing of the school's DRSLs, and identifying the indicators of students' demonstration of the DRSLs.
 - Developing a means of evaluating student work relative to the DRSLs in order to determine whether or not students become more effective communicators and better critical thinkers, writers, and citizens.

- The Visiting Team encourages building on the collaborative possibilities that come from the use of the Six Traits Writing program and the descriptions of indicators and assessments for the DRSLs to foster the development of horizontal and vertical curriculum mapping and teaming.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school map its curriculum both horizontally and vertically and strive to integrate the curriculum. The clarity of the curriculum offerings should make it easier to identify the content that students fail to learn, and lead to a more meaningful remediation process than having students repeat classes (which leads to some large classes). A ready resource for curriculum articulation is the work already being done regarding the Six Traits Writing process and the senior project.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the faculty develop grade level teams and consider the major concepts of middle level philosophy for all grades.